NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0217 FEBRUARY 20, 1976
DAVID LENT/BEIRUT

SADAT'S GULF VISIT SCENE-SETTER

ANNCR:

ON SATURDAY, EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT DEPARTS ON A VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, ABU DHABI, BAHRAIN, QATAR, AND KUWAIT. FROM THE V-O-A MIDDLE EAST BUREAU, V-O-A'S DAVID LENT EXAMINES SOME OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SADAT VISIT.

VOICE:

PRESIDENT SADAT IS TRAVELLING TO THE GULF ON A QUEST FOR ECONOMIC AID, FOR HELP IN BREAKING OUT OF EGYPT'S ISOLATION FROM ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS SINCE HE SIGNED THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT, AND FOR CONSULTATION ON HOW TO PROCEED NOW TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

MANAGERS OF EGYPT'S EFFORTS TO REVITALIZE THE COUNTRY'S STAGNATING ECONOMY HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL NEED FOUR AND ONE-HALF THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO GET THE ECONOMY ON THE MOVE AGAIN. EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING PRIVATELY THAT THEIR QUEST FOR FUNDS FROM THE ARAB OIL PRODUCERS HAS NOT MET RECENTLY WITH WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE PROPER RESPONSE. AND IN FACT, A KUWAITI NEWSPAPER SAID LAST WEEK THAT THE GULF STATES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO SUPPLY MORE AID TO EGYPT THAN IT IS ALREADY GETTING. THE PROBLEM IS THAT, WITH SAGGING OIL SALES, SOME OF THE OIL PRODUCERS ARE HAVING TROUBLE ENOUGH JUST SATISFYING THEIR OWN VORACIOUS APPETITE FOR DEVELOPMENT FUNDS.

PRESIDENT SADAT ALSO IS REPORTED EAGER TO ENLIST SAUDI AID IN HELPING EGYPT RESTORE ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, FOLLOWING OPPOSITION TO HIS SIGNING THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT. HE IS REPORTED TO FEEL THAT WITH FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINAI ACCORD THIS WEEKEND, THE TIME IS OPPORTUNE FOR FENCE MENDING. THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT IS SAID TO FEEL THAT SAUDI POLITICAL BACKING FOR EGYPT HAS NOT BEEN AS PRONOUNCED UNDER KING KHALED AS IT WAS UNDER HIS PREDECESSOR, KING FAISAL. CAIRO IS ALSO REPORTED UNEASY ABOUT WHAT IT REGARDS AS AN INCREASINGLY STRENGTHENED SYRIAN-JORDANIAN AXIS DIRECTED AGAINST IT, AND AGAINST THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. SYRIAN PREMIER MAHMOUD AL-AYOUBI SAID, UPON ARRIVAL IN AMMAN THIS WEEK FOR A MEETING OF THE HIGHER SYRIAN-JORDANIAN JOINT COMMITTEE, THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED TO TAKE JOINT STEPS TO BUILD UNITY BETWEEN THEM.

IN THE THIRD AREA OF EGYPTIAN CONCERN, WHERE TO GO IN SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, PRESIDENT SADAT WILL BE SEEKING A SAUDI COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT FOR A RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE. SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN OFFICIALS SAID THIS WEEK THAT NEITHER CONFEREE WOULD GO TO GENEVA. ON THURSDAY, EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ISMAIL FAHMI ISSUED YET ANOTHER CALL FOR THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. IT IS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT SADAT WILL HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS DURING HIS FIVE-DAY SOJOURN IN RIYADH, AND IN THE OTHER GULF STATE CAPITALS.

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